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AFFECTIVE MEANING AMONG HISPANIC AND MAINSTREAM NAVY-  
RECRUITS(U) ILLINOIS UNIV AT URBANA DEPT OF PSYCHOLOGY  
H C TRIANDIS ET AL. DEC 82 TR-ONR-26 N00014-80-C-0407

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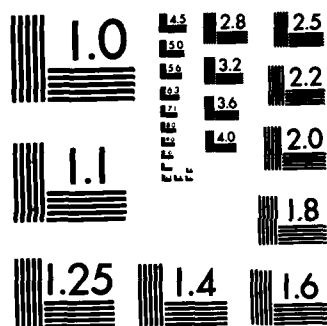
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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING FORM
1. REPORT NUMBER ONR-26	2. GOVT ACCESSION NO. AD A123521	3. RECIPIENT'S CATALOG NUMBER
4. TITLE (and Subtitle) Affective Meaning among Hispanic and Mainstream Navy Recruits		5. TYPE OF REPORT & PERIOD COVERED Interim Technical Report
7. AUTHOR(s) Harry C. Triandis Gerardo Marin C. Harry Hui		6. PERFORMING ORG. REPORT NUMBER
9. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS Department of Psychology University of Illinois 603 E. Daniel, Champaign, IL 61820		8. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER(s) N 00014-80-C-0407
11. CONTROLLING OFFICE NAME AND ADDRESS Organizational Effectiveness Research Group Office of Naval Research (Code 442) Arlington, VA 22217		10. PROGRAM ELEMENT, PROJECT, TASK AREA & WORK UNIT NUMBERS NR 170-906
14. MONITORING AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS (if different from Controlling Office)		12. REPORT DATE December, 1982
		13. NUMBER OF PAGES 15
		15. SECURITY CLASS. (of this report)
		15a. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE
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17. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of the abstract entered in Block 20, if different from Report)		
18. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES		
19. KEY WORDS (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) Affective meaning, Attitudes, Hispanics		
20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) see attached.		

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## Abstract

- An exploratory study of the evaluation, potency, activity, and familiarity judgments of samples of Mainstream and Hispanic male, Navy recruits, concerning 50 concepts, showed a great deal of overlap in the meaning of these concepts held by these samples. The few differences that were obtained are shown in Table 1, and generally do not replicate findings reported in the literature with studies using similar procedures. However, our samples consisted of highly acculturated Hispanics, and this may be responsible for this discrepancy. The few findings of the present study, when contrasted with the numerous findings of cultural differences identified in our studies of norms and roles suggest the hypothesis that acculturation has the effect of shifting the meaning of concepts towards convergence with the meanings they have in the Mainstream but has lesser effects on norms and role perceptions.

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## Affective Meaning among Hispanic and Mainstream Navy Recruits

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A major area of study in cross-cultural psychology is the influence of culture on cognition (e.g., Triandis, 1964). Within that area there are numerous studies of affective meaning showing differences in the meaning of key terms (e.g. Osgood, May & Miron, 1975; Landis, et al., 1976). Many of these studies utilized the semantic differential which is an efficient way of learning about similarities and differences in meaning across cultures. Osgood, May and Miron (1975) have indicated that this instrument is particularly useful in cross-cultural work, because in many cultures, scattered throughout the world, one can identify three dimensions: Evaluation (good, pleasant, beautiful), Potency (strong, large, heavy) and Activity (active, fast, alive). Even though culture/language groups may use different adjectives to describe evaluation, potency and activity, the fact that such adjectives cluster together, when numerous concepts are judged on semantic differential scales, permits comparison. For example, an Indian sample may employ "nectarlike" while a Japanese might employ "beautiful," but the fact that such adjectives correlate with good, pleasant, etc. permits the identification of an area of common meaning and cultural comparisons within that area.

Some Hispanic samples in the U.S. have been studied with the semantic differential. Thus, Derbyshire (1968) administered this instrument to a sample of East Los Angeles Chicano adolescents using the concepts SELF, MOTHER and FATHER and found strong sex typed responses. Martinez, Martinez, Olmedo and Goldman (1976) administered the instrument to 288 Chicano and Anglo high school students and studied five concepts: SELF, MALE, FEMALE, FATHER and MOTHER. They reported that the Chicanos and Anglos differed on these five concepts

with the greatest differences being on their evaluations of MALE and FATHER. Male Chicanos perceived MALE as more potent and FATHER as more inactive than the rest of the subjects; by contrast, male Anglo subjects saw MALE as less potent and FATHER as more potent. Overall, differences were more marked between both groups of subjects in terms of the scales of the Potency dimension. Later, these authors (Ramirez, Martinez, Olmedo & Martinez, 1981) found that again scales from the Potency dimension differentiate between Anglos and Chicanos when rating the same five concepts. Hogan-Garcia, Martinez and Martinez (1979) administered a semantic differential to 201 Black, Chicano, and Anglo college students, and used the same five concepts. They found that the Blacks and Chicanos of their sample had more similar meanings of these concepts than did the two minority groups when compared with the Anglos. They tentatively concluded that the minority experience may be a more important factor in the assignment of connotative meanings to these concepts than the language used by the subjects.

The present study explores potential differences in the meaning of various concepts among Hispanics and Anglos. Of special interest was the possible confirmation of the role of the Potency dimension in differentiating Anglos from Chicanos as previously found by Martinez and his colleagues. The inclusion of other Hispanic groups in this study provided an opportunity to study the generality of Martinez et al.'s findings among other Hispanic sub-groups.

### Method

#### Subjects

One hundred-six Hispanics and 119 Mainstream male Navy recruits responded to a questionnaire while being classified into Navy jobs, as part of a larger study of their perceptions of the social environment. In each of the three

Navy recruit stations (Florida, California, and Illinois) when a Spanish-surname recruit was to be classified, the classification officer checked the recruit's self-identification on an application form on which "Hispanic" was one of the ways in which the applicant could describe himself. If the Spanish-surname recruit had selected the "Hispanic" self-identification label, he was asked to complete the questionnaire. At that time another recruit (with a non-Spanish surname) was randomly selected and given the same questionnaire. These other recruits are here referred to as "Mainstream" and will include both whites and blacks as well as Hispanics who did not identify themselves as "Hispanic." Of our Hispanic subjects, 34% self-identified themselves as Mexican and 34% as Spanish-Americans, 13% as Puerto Ricans, 3% were Cuban and 9% were Central and South American immigrants or descendents. The remaining 55 did not respond.

#### Concepts

In addition to the five concepts that previous studies suggested may be interesting (self, mother, father, male, female), we selected 45 from the 600 concepts used by Osgood, May and Miron (1975) in their Atlas of Affective Meaning. In selecting these concepts we relied on a review of the literature on Hispanics in the U.S. (Lisansky, Note 1) and made a judgment as to whether there was any possibility that the particular concept used in the Atlas might have a different meaning for Hispanics and Mainstream recruits (e.g., respect).

#### Scales

Four types of unipolar scales were used, to tap Evaluation, Potency, Activity and Familiarity. The subjects were asked to rate, on a 10-point scale (1=Never, 2=Almost Never...9=Almost Always, and 10=Always) the extent to which the descriptions "good, pleasant, desirable, and valuable" (Evaluation), "powerful, strong, heavy and large" (Potency), "active, alive, fast, and lively" (Activity)

and "familiar, well-known to most people" (Familiarity) fit each concept. In this fashion each of the stimuli was judged on each of four unipolar scales. Thus the task required  $4 \times 50$  (concepts) = 200 judgments.

The unorthodox use of unipolar rather than bipolar scales reflects the finding that bipolar scales have certain methodological shortcomings: First, there is an ambiguity about the midpoint of the scale, since it is not clear whether it reflects neutrality or non-commitment or equal amounts of the quality described by the scale or on the other hand, uncertainty. Second, it has been found (Triandis & Marín, 1984) that the assumptions of bipolarity do not hold. For example, when subjects were asked to judge a number of stimulus persons on unipolar scales such as educated and uneducated the judgments violated the assumptions of bipolarity. Specifically, the subjects were asked to judge on a 10-point scale whether an ethnic group, e.g., Puerto Ricans, consisted of persons who were educated and on another occasion whether they were uneducated. If the bipolarity assumption holds, the percent of the subjects who give answers in the 6 to 10 range for educated should be the same as the percentage who give answers in the 1 to 5 range for uneducated. But this was not the case. Differences in these percentages were often large, and in one case (for cooperative vs. competitive) they reached 36%. Thus, unipolar scales that do not assume bipolarity are to be preferred, even though they require that the subjects make twice as many judgments.

### Results and Discussion

A comparison of the data provided by our Mexican-American subjects with those of other Hispanic groups (Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central and South American) showed that on 20 out of 27 cases where there was a significant difference, the means of the various Hispanic groups were close to each other and contrasted with the mean of the Mainstream. This is evidence for the homogeneity of the



Hispanic groups, which then allows us to treat the Hispanics as a single group. The seven exceptions were cases when the Puerto Rican group was significantly different from the Mainstream, while the other Hispanic groups were not different. In one of these seven cases the pattern was different, in that the Mainstream sample was in-between the Mexican and the Puerto Rican sample means. Specifically, for the concept TIME, on the evaluative dimension (good, pleasant, desirable, and valuable) the Puerto Rican mean was 7.9 (almost always good), the Mainstream mean was 6.8, and the Mexican-American mean was 5.9, the ANOVA showing these means to be different at  $p < .02$ . In the remaining six cases, the obtained difference between Mainstream and Hispanics is entirely due to the way the Puerto Ricans reacted to the concepts: specifically, for CHEATING on evaluation, with Puerto Ricans had a mean of 2.7 (sometimes good), the Mainstream means was 1.1 and Mexicans 1.3 (almost never good); ENEMY active with Puerto Ricans 5.7 (more often than not) and the Mainstream (4.3) and Mexicans (4.2) (probably not); MAN active, with Puerto Ricans at 7.5, the others at 6.1 and 5.9; MOTHER, active, with Puerto Ricans 7.3, the others 6.6 and 6.8; SAVING MONEY, familiar, with Puerto Ricans at 7.8, the Mainstream at 6.4 and the Mexicans at 6.0, and SOUTH AMERICAN, on potency, with Puerto Ricans at 6.2 and the others at 4.8 and 4.3. Given these results, we have considered all Hispanic respondents as one group when reporting the data below.

Table 1 presents the alpha levels of the obtained significant differences between Hispanics and Mainstream recruits. Out of the 200 comparisons 34 were significant at .05 or better. Thus, the two populations are quite similar (83% overlap) in the meanings they assign to the concepts selected for this study.

Ethnic comparisons, such as those we are about to describe, may be challenged by the rival hypothesis that the obtained results are not due to ethnicity but might be accounted by different levels of acculturation, modernity, or social

class. We had information on those dimensions because each subject, in addition to answering the questionnaire described above, responded to questions reflecting acculturation, modernity and social class. Special acculturation indices were developed by Triandis, Kashima, Hui, Lisansky and Marín (Note 2).

After factor analysis three factors were identified: 1. Length of Residence in the U.S., 2. Media Acculturation (prefers mostly English music, TV, movies), and 3. Social Acculturation (prefers Anglo co-workers, has mostly Anglo close friends, has been romantically involved with mostly Anglos). Modernity was measured by the Inkeles scale (see Inkeles & Smith, 1974). Social class was measured by items inquiring about the subject's approximate family income during the past year, the subject's subjective assessment of whether his family was poor, below average, above average or relatively well off when he was growing up, father's and mother's occupation, and so on.

First, within the Hispanic sample only, we examined if modernity, the acculturation index or social class accounted for significant amounts of variance in the way the semantic differential judgments were made. This required the computation of a multiple correlation with the semantic judgments as the dependent variable and the indices of acculturation, modernity or social class as the independent variables. We found that none of the multiple R squares exceeded .15. The highest value was for DISCIPLINE judged on the evaluative factor. Modernity accounted for most of the variance in that case, and resulted in a multiple R-squared of .15. In all other cases the amount of variance accounted by the three independent variables was less than 10 percent, and the co-efficients were not significant.

Second, using both the Hispanic and Mainstream samples, we computed the multiple Rs with modernity, social class, and ethnicity as the independent variables. The regression equation was first entered with modernity and social class as the predictors, and then ethnicity was added. If the rival hypothesis

that modernity or social class can account for the results is valid there should be little effect on the multiple R-square when ethnicity is added to the prediction. In fact that is what happened in only three cases. In all other cases, where a difference between Hispanics and Mainstream had been identified before, ethnicity provided a significant increase in predictability.

In Table 1 we use special symbols to indicate that both modernity and ethnicity or only modernity account for the obtained results.

When only one difference corresponds to a given concept one hesitates to assume that there are important differences in meaning, since they may be due to chance factors. After all, with 200 comparisons 10 will show differences by chance. Thus, we limit our comments to those concepts where at least two factors showed a difference. We note, then, a difference for the word DISCIPLINE which is both more good and more familiar in the case of the Hispanics.

Our multiple regression checks of the hypotheses that modernity, acculturation, or social class account for the obtained differences, in this particular case suggested that modernity alone accounts for the difference on the evaluation factor (the less modern see DISCIPLINE as more good) and acculturation has a significant role in the case of the familiarity factor (DISCIPLINE is more familiar to those low in acculturation). The greater potency and activity attributed to GOVERNMENT suggests a theme consistent with the Power Distance findings of Hofstede (1980) and Triandis et al. (Note 3). The Hispanics tend to see a more substantial difference between those with power and those without power than do Mainstream subjects. The greater potency and activity attributed to LUCK would suggest more external control among Hispanics, however, our own work with Rotter's Scale (Hui, et al., Note 4) and that of others (e.g., Carrillo-Beron, 1974; Cole, Rodriguez & Cole, 1978; Nelson, Knight, Kagan & Gumbiner, 1980; Buriel 1981, 1982) does not support this view. The results with the semantic differential may be due in part to the tendency found among Latin Americans to

perceive factors such as luck as causes of events, and hence to be more external than Anglo respondents (Betancourt & Weiner, 1982). The greater activity and familiarity of the concept RELATIVES could be explained in terms of the more extended family often found among Hispanics, and the value placed on the nuclear and extended families (Familismo). As a matter of fact, we have previously found that Hispanics indicated that they were more willing to sacrifice themselves to attend family events than Mainstream respondents (Triandis, Marín, Betancourt, Lisansky & Chang, Note 5).

Perhaps we are justified in also looking at those results that are significant beyond the .01 level, though two of them probably have reached significance by chance. These 16 results suggest less rejection of CENSORSHIP and CHEATING among the Hispanics than the Mainstream, which may reflect their familiarity with censorship and exposure to exploitation which requires cheating for survival, a more active view of DEFEAT, ENEMY, LUCK, LATIN AMERICA, and SOUTH AMERICA, which may reflect greater exposure to such concepts, as one might expect in a segment of the population that is both exploited and has contacts with Latin America, greater potency of GOVERNMENT, I (MYSELF) and LATIN AMERICA, which may reflect Power Distance, and perhaps a "being orientation" (hence self knowledge), which is also consistent with the higher scores on familiarity for I (MYSELF). Obviously, these comments are speculative.

When our results are compared with those of previous studies with Chicanos, two interesting differences emerge. First, while our data agree with that of previous studies in showing significant differences in the evaluation of the self, the directions are in the opposite direction. For example, while Martinez et al. (1976) find that Chicanos rate themselves significantly lower on the Potency dimension than Anglos, our data show that Hispanics rate the same concept ["I (myself)"] higher in Potency and in Familiarity than our Mainstream respondents. The second significant difference between our data and that of the studies by

Martinez and his colleagues is that while they found the Potency dimension as the one showing the stronger differences between Chicanos and Anglos, our data seem to suggest that Activity is a better source of differences between these ethnic groups.

As might be expected, Hispanics had a more positive, powerful, active and familiar view of the concepts LATIN AMERICA and SOUTH AMERICA. While we had expected to confirm the results by Martinez and his colleagues where significant differences would be found between the evaluation given by Hispanics and Anglos to the concepts MALE, FEMALE, FATHER and MOTHER, our data show no differences between the ratings of our two ethnic groups on these four concepts. According to some of Martinez's research (Olmedo, Martinez & Martinez, 1978), the differences could be due to the fact that our Hispanics may be more acculturated to the Anglo majority culture. But our analysis using the acculturation level of our respondents as a predictor does not support this view.

However, this analysis is not conclusive, because we know that our sample of Hispanics is relatively acculturated. In order to join the Navy a person has to have reasonably good command of English. Thus, our acculturation scores have a relatively small range, and most of our subjects fall relatively high on the acculturation indices (see Triandis et al., Note 2). Thus, our failure to obtain confirmation of previous findings may well be due to the relatively high acculturation levels of our subjects.

One striking observation is that all 34 of the obtained differences are in the same direction, with the Hispanics giving a higher response than the Mainstream. This suggests that there is a response set to give higher responses: There is a tendency among Hispanics to indicate that concepts are more good, strong and active. This is especially so for the Activity dimension. Thus Hispanics seem to show more of a Pollyanna effect (Matlin & Stang, 1979) than Mainstream respondents. At the same time, we must keep in mind that the 50 concepts were largely selected

because they might be important for Hispanics. Thus, the findings that Hispanics find many of them more positive, powerful and active may be due, in part, to the selection of the concepts.

One interesting point is that while we have obtained in the present series of studies, numerous differences between the Mainstream and Hispanics on norms and roles, and related concepts, we have not obtained many differences in the present study. Is it the case that acculturation first changes the meaning of words, and then norms and roles? This seems like a plausible hypothesis, but it obviously will require additional studies to explore it.

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Table 1

Mean Rating of all Concepts on the Four Dimensions

Concept	<u>Evaluation</u>		<u>Potency</u>		<u>Activity</u>		<u>Familiarity</u>	
	M	H	M	H	M	H	M	H
Being Aggressive	4.8	5.0	5.5	5.4	6.5	6.5	5.8	6.5
Anger	2.3	2.9	5.3	4.9	4.6	5.2	6.9	6.8
Business	6.8	6.8	6.0	6.0	6.1	6.1	7.0	6.9
Capitalism	5.5	5.2	6.5	6.2	5.8	5.5	6.6	6.2
Censorship	3.6**	4.7	5.2	5.0	4.1	4.6	5.8	5.8
Cheating	1.1**	2.1	2.9	3.2	3.1	3.6	6.1	6.7
Cooperation	7.6	7.3	6.1	6.7	6.3*	6.9	6.7	6.8
Competition	6.7	7.0	6.9	6.7	6.6	7.0	7.3	7.4
Defeat	2.6	3.2	4.3	4.6	3.0***	4.0	6.1	6.7
Defense	6.7	6.8	7.1	7.1	6.6	6.7	7.1	7.1
Democracy	7.0	6.8	6.7	6.7	6.2	6.3	6.8	6.8
Development	6.7	6.9	6.4	6.6	6.3*	6.9	6.4	6.8
Discipline	6.6(*)	7.3	6.6	6.8	5.9	6.2	6.0**	6.8
Education	7.7	7.7	6.9	6.8	6.7	6.8	6.9	7.0
Factory Worker	5.2	5.0	5.5	5.8	5.6	5.9	5.7	6.2
Enemy	1.5	2.0	4.2	4.7	4.2**	5.1	6.4	6.8
Failure	1.8*	2.6	3.5	3.6	2.8	3.4	5.9	5.9
Fear	3.2	3.0	5.2	4.9	4.3	4.7	6.8	6.7
Female (gender)	7.8	7.7	4.3	5.0	6.4	6.7	7.8	7.9
Foreigner	5.4	5.4	4.6	4.5	4.9	5.2	5.5	6.2
Friend	8.0	7.7	6.2	6.2	6.3*	6.9	7.1	7.2
Friendship	8.0	7.9	7.1	7.3	6.7	7.0	7.4	7.0
Future	6.6	6.4	6.0	6.2	6.2	6.4	5.4**	6.5
Government	5.7	6.3	6.6**	7.4	5.8**	6.8	7.1	7.5
I (myself)	7.1(*)	7.5	5.6***	6.6	6.4	6.7	5.5***	6.5

	<u>Evaluation</u>		<u>Potency</u>		<u>Activity</u>		<u>Familiarity</u>	
	M	H	M	H	M	H	M	H
Justice	6.7	7.3	6.7	7.3	5.8*	6.5	7.1	7.3
Labor Unions	5.4**	6.3	6.5	6.7	6.3	6.5	6.6	7.0
Luck	6.5	6.8	4.6*	5.5	4.6**	5.5	6.3	6.2
Lying	1.6	2.2	3.7	4.3	3.5	3.9	6.3	6.6
Male (gender)	5.7	6.0	6.4	6.7	6.1	6.5	7.3	7.4
Man	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.7	6.1*	6.8	7.6	7.9
Masculinity	6.5	6.7	6.5	6.8	6.0*	6.6	7.1	7.2
Money	7.0	7.6	7.3	7.6	6.6	7.0	7.8	8.0
Mother	8.0	8.0	5.6	5.9	6.6	6.9	7.6	7.5
North America	7.1	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.0	7.4	7.6
Latin America	5.4**	6.2	4.6***	5.6	4.9***	5.9	5.7**	6.7
Poor People	3.8	4.2	3.6	3.7	3.6	4.1	6.0	6.4
Prayer	7.2	7.5	6.9	7.1	6.0	6.3	7.0	7.4
Punishment	4.7	4.4	5.7	5.5	4.8	4.7	7.0	7.0
Relatives	6.9	7.2	5.7	6.0	5.7*	6.4	6.8*	7.5
Respect	7.6	7.9	6.9	7.1	6.1	6.7	6.5	6.9
Salary	7.4	7.2	6.3	6.3	5.9	5.8	7.2	7.4
Saving Money	7.3	7.8	6.2*	7.0	5.6	6.3	6.4	6.6
Sea	7.0	6.7	7.3	7.3	7.0	7.2	6.7	7.0
Sex	7.8	7.9	7.1	7.1	7.2	7.3	8.0	7.9
Soldier	6.3	6.8	6.8	7.1	6.8	7.1	7.3	7.5
South America	5.3	5.8	4.9*	5.6	5.1**	5.9	5.8*	6.5
Success	7.4	7.6	6.9	7.1	6.4	7.0	6.0*	6.7
Sympathy	5.9	5.9	4.7	5.3	4.7*	5.5	6.4	6.6
Time	6.8	6.5	5.8	6.3	6.4	6.8	7.5	7.7

\*  $p < .05$ \*\*  $p < .01$ \*\*\*  $p < .001$ 

□ both modernity and ethnicity correlate with these judgments

○ modernity alone can explain this difference

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